

A FRAMEWORK FOR COVID-19 INEQUALITIES

ODPH



BACKGROUND

Worldwide, countries have implemented wide-ranging social distancing measures to reduce transmission of COVID-19 to directly protect health. These measures slow the spread of infection but are impacting on almost all aspects of our lives. They are likely to be in place (in some form) for a significant period of time and have profound health, economic and social consequences (termed indirect impacts of COVID-19). Moreover, these direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 are experienced differently by different groups. There is therefore a risk that the pandemic may increase and entrench health inequalities that existed and were widening before the emergency. It is crucial that we increase our understanding of the broad impacts of the pandemic and what population groups will be more greatly affected and in what way. This will enable health needs of the population and the particularly affected groups to be recognised and monitored so that appropriate support can be provided to mitigate the impact. There are also many examples of local communities and systems responding positively to the pandemic to support those most in need. In addition, whilst the impact of the pandemic is likely to be severe, changing public perspectives and new ways of working provide opportunities to promote health. Building on these positives will be essential to ensuring long-term health and tackling health inequalities.

AIM

The aim of this document is to provide a broad approach to assessing the broad health and wellbeing impacts on the population of Plymouth as a result of COVID-19.

Supporting this document, Kamal Patel, a Registrar in Public Health, has developed a detailed breakdown of components of this model, along with the data required to start to understand the impacts and therefore the assessment of need for Plymouth.

It is intended that the Health and Wellbeing Board will consider some elements of this at an initial meeting, to be set for September. Local expertise in topics and the impacts will be called upon to discuss their observations and knowledge, with the intention of forming an action plan.

IMPACTS

Due to the broad and far-reaching health impacts of COVID-19 there are many different ways in which these can be categorised. In this report, the impacts of COVID-19 are divided into the direct health impact of catching COVID-19, the indirect impacts on specific behaviours, groups and conditions, and the indirect impacts of changes to the wider determinants of health. Themes are identified from each of these domains (see figure on page 2). It is clear, however, that these themes are interrelated and there is significant overlap between them.

Within each theme the following questions will be considered:

- How COVID-19 is affecting this area and what populations are particularly affected?
- What is the current evidence for COVID-19 impacts and inequalities?
- What are the potential impact of future changes?
- What indicators can be monitored?
- What Plymouth data is readily available?
- What are we doing now?
- What can we do/future opportunities are there?

